

Pipe Trouble

DEVELOPED BY Pop Sandbox

SUMMARY

TAGS

- [Community](#)
- [Problem Solving](#)
- [Puzzle](#)

Play

SYNOPSIS

In *Pipe Trouble*, players must lay natural gas pipelines in order to make money and transport natural gas from the beginning of the end of the level. As the player lays pipes across a gridded map, they run the risk of facing opposition from the government and the community depending on where pipe is laid.

Each level begins with a predetermined start and end point, between which lie a variety of crop fields, forests, and open stretches of land. Pipe tiles are generated randomly and the player always has four different tiles to choose from when deciding what type of pipe to place. Placing pipe over forests or crop fields upsets the community, and if too much damage is done to the local environment, then protestors, vandals, government officials (bringing fines and injunctions), and even pipeline bombers will step in to oppose the player, making it more difficult to lay pipe or even destroying the pipeline. These are all issues explored by *[Trouble in the Peace](#)*, the documentary film that *Pipe Trouble* was developed alongside with. After the first piece of pipe is put down, natural gas begins to flow towards the open starting point, making it crucial to complete the pipe before a spill causes an environmental disaster.

The core mechanic of the game is derived from the classic arcade game *Pipe Mania* (1989), making *Pipe Trouble* an understandable and accessible vehicle to promote conversations about the natural gas industry's relationship with local communities. Through the introduction of financial, social, and political constraints to the pipe laying mechanic, the experience is kept current and mechanically unique, making *Pipe Trouble* a challenging, engaging game.

As part of Pop Sandbox's distribution strategy to maximize conversations produced by the game, *Pipe Trouble* was placed in public spaces as an arcade game. *Pipe Trouble* received much notoriety after its release due to misinterpretation by several media outlets, causing the game to be taken down until reviewed by an independent source. *Pipe Trouble* passed this review, and went on to be the first game featured at the Cannes Film Festival.